

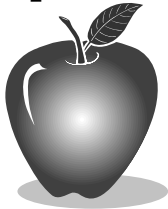
Focus on

Fluoride

This newsletter is designed to share information on school fluoride programs with administrators, principals, and teachers. PLEASE ROUTE THIS newsletter to staff working with the school fluoride program.

Vol. 5, No. 2 September 2000

Tips for Teachers.....




Each year school personnel often have to deal with a number of dental conditions on an emergency basis. Here are a few hints for some of the most common problems you may encounter.

If a Child Has a Toothache:

- Rinse the mouth with warm water to clean out food that may be lodged in the cavity. Use dental floss to remove any food that might be trapped in the cavity or between the teeth.
- Do not place aspirin on the aching tooth or gums.
- Advise parents to take the child to the dentist as soon as possible.

If a Child Breaks a Tooth:

- Gently clean dirt from the injured area with warm water.
- Protect the tooth from further exposure to air or cold liquid (cover with sterile gauze).
- Place a cold compress over the face in the area of the injured tooth to reduce the swelling.
- If an exposed nerve is obvious, advise parents to take the student to a dentist immediately.

Want some
life-saving
advice?

Ask your dental hygienist.

National
Dental Hygiene
Month
October 2000

October is National Dental Hygiene Month. This year's theme focuses on research that links some life-threatening conditions to oral health, and the dental hygienist's role in helping to maintain patients' oral health as well as overall health. Recent animal and population-based studies have demonstrated an association between periodontal diseases and diabetes, heart disease and stroke, and adverse pregnancy outcomes. Dental hygienists screen not only for signs and symptoms of dental diseases, but also for other serious health problems such as HIV infection, oral cancers, eating disorders, substance abuse and diabetes. October is a good time to invite a dental hygienist to your classroom to talk about good dental care habits.

Oral Health of Youth Needs Improvement.....

The fourth biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted during the spring of 1999 shows the oral health of North Dakota's children needs improvement. Weighted data were obtained from 1,666 seventh and eighth grade students and 1,823 students in grades nine through 12. Seventh and eighth grade students were asked about dental visits, while students in grades nine through 12 were asked about dental visits, daily brushing habits, cavities in their permanent teeth and use of mouthguards during contact sports.



Daily Brushing:

While 77.5 percent of students brushed their teeth daily, nearly one-fourth (22.5%) did not. Female students (87%) were more likely to brush daily than were male students (68%).

Dental Visits:

While 76.6 percent of students in grades nine through 12 visited the dentist within the past year, 13.4 percent had not. Two percent of these students have never visited the dentist.

A slightly higher percentage of students (81.9%) in grades seven and eight have visited the dentist in the past year.

Cavities in Permanent Teeth:

Over half (56.5%) of students reported one or more cavities in their permanent teeth.

Use of Mouthguards in Sports:

Of the students who participated in contact sports, over two-thirds (69.1%) never or rarely wore mouthguards. Only 12 percent of students reported always wearing mouthguards and 18.8 percent sometimes or most of the time wore mouthguards.

"You're not healthy without good oral health."

- C. Everett Koop

Did You Know?

Forty percent of North Dakota dentists are planning to retire in the next 10 years. Dentistry is a career with many job opportunities in North Dakota.

Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General

The first-ever Surgeon General's report on oral health identifies a "silent epidemic" of dental and oral diseases and calls for a national effort to improve oral health among all Americans. The report, released in May 2000, shows profound differences that affect those without the knowledge or resources to achieve good oral care. Those who suffer the worst oral health include poor Americans, especially children and the elderly. Uninsured children are 2.5 times less likely to receive dental care than insured children, and children from families without dental insurance are three times as likely to have dental needs as compared to their insured peers.

"The Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health provides important reminders that oral health means more than sound teeth. Oral health is integral to overall health," said Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services. Serious oral disorders may undermine self-image and self-esteem, discourage normal social interaction, and lead to chronic stress and depression as well as incur great financial cost, U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher said. *"They also may interfere with vital functions such as breathing, eating, swallowing and speaking. The burden of disease restricts activities in school, work and home, and often significantly diminishes the quality of life."*

This report calls for a National Oral Health Plan to improve the quality of life and eliminate oral health disparities by:

- Changing perceptions regarding oral health and disease so that oral health becomes an accepted component of general health.
- Building the science and the evidence base to improve oral health. The challenge is to understand all the things that can impact complex dental diseases and translate these research findings into health care practice and healthy lifestyles.
- Building an effective public health infrastructure. Disease prevention programs are not being implemented in many communities because of a lack of trained public health practitioners knowledgeable about oral health. There is a shortfall in the number of men and women choosing careers in oral health education and research.
- Removing barriers between people and oral health services. Lack of insurance and safety net programs and low levels of reimbursement for services are some of the impediments to obtaining oral health care.
- Building public-private partnerships to improve oral health of those who still suffer disproportionately from oral diseases. The efforts of public, private and voluntary agencies and organizations are vital to improving oral health and eliminating disparities.

► Pointers for Parents Preventing Tooth Decay & Injury...

Children need healthy teeth for chewing, speaking clearly and looking good. With advances in dentistry and oral care products, today's children have a better chance than ever to grow up with strong, cavity-free teeth. Parents play an important role in a child's dental development, because better oral health for your child begins with you.

YOUR CHILD SHOULD:

- Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between his/her teeth daily with dental floss.
- Wear a mouthguard at athletic practices and games.
- Have dental sealants (a plastic coating painted on the grooved chewing surfaces of the back teeth) applied as soon as the teeth erupt.
- Limit in-between meal snacking, especially sugary snacks.
- Visit your dentist regularly. Your dentist can help prevent problems from occurring and can catch those that do occur while they are easy to treat.

Supplies...

If you need supplies for your school fluoride program call: 701.328.4930 • 1.800.472.2286 • Fax: 701.328.1412

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